



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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### **ABS releases first results from a 'challenging' Census**

The Australian Statistician, Brian Pink, announced today that at 9.30 this morning, the first results from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing were released on the Internet.

"For the first time in our national history, every Australian who can access the Internet will be able to get all the basic Census data free of charge, from the moment of its release," said Mr Pink.

The Statistician noted that the 2006 Census had been one of the most challenging ever undertaken by the ABS. "Firstly, because of the strength of the employment market in Australia, we had difficulty recruiting and retaining our field workforce," said Mr Pink.

"Secondly, the growth in the number of busy two-income households and two-house families, coupled with the increase in occupancy of high-rise apartment buildings and other security-enabled complexes, made distributing and collecting paper Census forms much more difficult than in the past.

"In spite of these increasing stresses on its operation, the Census was highly successful and produced high quality data. However there are real risks to the future conduct of the Census. We are already examining ways of dealing with these challenges in the 2011 Census."

Mr Pink said the first release of data today included a large amount of information about Australia, with much more to come over the next 12 months. "The data in this release reveals important changes occurring in Australian society, including further ageing of our population; increasing cultural diversity, with English slightly less likely to be the language spoken at home; families more likely to be buying their own homes; and a decline in the number of family households, with more people living alone," he said.

Mr Pink thanked Australians for their ready participation in the Census, which he described as not so much an exercise in gathering information, as one of giving back to Australia the data which each household or individual had provided. "The Census is about putting vital information into the hands of users right across the nation," he said.

An important achievement of the 2006 Census was the successful first use of an Internet Census option, the eCensus. "The ABS was proud to receive the 2007 e-Government award in Excellence for the eCensus," Mr Pink said. "The eCensus will undoubtedly play a greater role in the 2011 Census.

"In addition, the ABS Census mapping project was awarded first prize in the 2007 Map Competition at the Spatial Sciences Institute Biennial International Conference in Hobart last month.

"Good decisions are based on good information, and the Census is a very powerful source of high quality information for governments, businesses, community organisations and individuals," the Statistician said.

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